

The Sermon on the Mount

"Judge Not That You Be Not Judged" (Matthew 7:1-6)

INTRODUCTION:

- I. Throughout our studies in The Sermon on the Mount we've been looking at the wonderful teachings of Jesus concerning the standard of righteousness He expects of all who would be His disciples.
 - A. NOT ONLY has Jesus provided us with wonderful principles of Christian living we can all incorporate into our daily lives, He has ALSO warned against the many ways we can be like many of the scribes and Pharisees, the religious elite of His day – many of whom were perhaps the biggest and most notorious hypocrites who ever walked the earth.
 1. Who were these men, and why have they become the very epitome of hypocrisy?
 2. Many of you already know this, but for the benefit of those who may not know, let me briefly explain who these men were.
 - a. Centuries before Jesus came to the earth, the Jewish people had turned so far away from God that the Lord allowed their enemies to conquer them and reduce them to slavery – many of

who were even taken into captivity to spend the rest of their lives serving their captors in foreign countries.

- b. When a new generation among the Jewish people had grown into adulthood and clearly repented of the sins of their forefathers, God allowed the people of Israel to return to their war-torn lands and cities to rebuild and reestablish themselves as a nation once again.
- c. Many among this new generation were determined they would not repeat the mistakes of their forefathers and vowed to keep the Law of Moses – the Old Testament Law – in absolute purity.
- d. The desire to keep the Law faithfully prompted lengthy and heated debates over how to properly INTERPRET the Law.
- e. And the groups that took a more radical and legalistic approach were the scribes (who were more familiar with the law than anyone since they spent their whole lives meticulously copying the Hebrew scrolls) and a very conservative religious group known as the Pharisees (which means “The Separate Ones”).
- f. Unless you kept THEIR interpretation of the Law of Moses, you were considered by the scribes and Pharisees as being LIBERAL, DISLOYAL, UNFAITHFUL, or just plain IGNORANT.

- g. The problem was that THEIR interpretation of the Law of Moses was not only THEIR interpretation, but in almost every instance, their interpretation was ALSO WRONG! But you couldn't convince THEM they were wrong.
- h. Therefore, when Jesus came along, He not only challenged their narrow and erroneous interpretations of the Law and all the traditions they forced others to keep, but Jesus ALSO rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for being judgmental in thinking they were the only ones who were right – the only ones who had the truth!
- i. And worst of all – their religion was only skin deep. They loved to impress everyone else with how holy and righteous they were. In other words, they made a big spectacle of their religious beliefs and loved to be seen by others doing all their religious acts.
- j. But in REAL LIFE, these men were FAR from being the pious religious zealots they portrayed themselves to be. On the OUTSIDE, they appeared to be holy and righteous, but on the INSIDE, some of them were among the most corrupt and immoral men you could find.

- k. And it was because Jesus constantly exposed their hypocrisy that they eventually led the campaign to trump of false charges against Jesus and have Him crucified.

B. When we come to The Sermon on the Mount, we find Jesus repeatedly speaking of hypocrites, and it's clear in our understanding that Jesus had the scribes and Pharisees in mind when He said:

1. **Matthew 6:2** – *Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*
2. **Matthew 6:5** – *And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*
3. **Matthew 6:16** – *Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

C. But perhaps the most scathing rebuke of Jesus against the scribes and Pharisees came in the **23rd chapter of Matthew**, just days before His

arrest and crucifixion. Seven times Jesus rebuked these men with words like:

1. **Matthew 23:13** – *But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.*
2. **Mathew 23:14** – *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.*
3. **Matthew 23:15** – *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.*
4. **Matthew 23:23-24** - *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!*
5. **Matthew 23:25-26** – *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee, first*

cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

6. **Matthew 23:27-28** – *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

7. **Matthew 23:29-36** – *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' 31 Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. 33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36

Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

II. And so, as we move into the final section of The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs His disciples regarding one of the most difficult principles for you and I to put into practice in our daily lives.

A. Jesus instructs His disciples to AVOID being like the scribes and Pharisees who were notorious for looking down their pious hypocritical noses at everyone else who didn't live up to THEIR own particular standards of right and wrong.

1. Let's take a look at these verses – which are probably the most often QUOTED verses, even among those who are not religious, but which are also among the most often MISUNDERSTOOD and MISINTERPRETED sayings of Jesus.
2. **Matthew 7:1-6** – *Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you*

will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. 6 Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

BODY:

- I. Everyone is familiar with the statement of Jesus, "*Judge not, that you be not judged,*" but unfortunately, many completely misunderstand what Jesus meant by these words.
 - A. Some believe Jesus is condemning ALL forms of judgment – which He is NOT.
 1. In fact, Jesus said there ARE times when we MUST make, or form, a judgment.
 - a. Jesus didn't condemn removing the speck from your brother's eye. **(Matthew 7:3-5)**
 - (1). What He SAID was we need to FIRST remove the log from our OWN eye, and THEN we will be able to see clearly to remove the tiny speck from our brother's eye.
 - (2). However, identifying the LOG in our OWN eye and the SPECK in our BROTHER'S eye requires that a judgment

be made – we BOTH have to recognize sin in lives in order to properly remove it.

b. **Matthew 7:6** – *Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.*

(1). In other words, there are certain people we may need to completely avoid when it comes to rebuking them.

(2). They are like dogs and hogs – they won't appreciate things that are holy and truths that are as precious as costly pearls, and worse yet, they will turn on YOU when you try to rebuke or correct them.

(3). Therefore, we need to exercise some discretionary judgments in deciding who these people are.

2. Therefore, Jesus is NOT condemning ALL forms of judgment in these verses.

a. He's NOT condemning the need to approach a brother or sister in Christ and rebuke them for persistent and unrepentant sin in their lives.

(1). In those cases we need to be like Nathan the prophet who had the courage to stand face to face with David, king of

Israel, and tell him he's sinned against God by committing adultery with another man's wife. **(2 Samuel 12:1-15)**

(2). And we need to be like the apostle Paul who stood face to face with the apostle Peter and rebuked him for his hypocrisy in the way he avoided associating with newly converted Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians when prominent Jewish Christians came to town. **(Galatians 2:1-21)**

c. And Jesus is NOT condemning the need to oppose and, if necessary, expose false religious doctrine and those who teach it.

(1). Jesus opposed and exposed the false teachings of the scribes and Pharisees and the Sadducees (the Jewish sect that didn't believe in the resurrection from the dead).

(2). The apostle Paul not only opposed and exposed false doctrine and false teachers, but instructed those who preach and teach the gospel of Christ to do likewise.

3. So, once again, Jesus is NOT condemning ALL forms of judgment in these verses.

II. So, what kind of judgment IS Jesus condemning in His Sermon on the Mount? The answer is Jesus condemns TWO SPECIFIC kinds of judgment here.

A. First, Jesus condemns judgment based on DOUBLE-STANDARDS – a more harsh, more strict set of standards for YOU and a more lenient and tolerant set of standards for ME.

1. **Matthew 7:1-2** – *Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*

- a. In other words, if we set a standard of right and wrong for OTHERS to live by, we BETTER be prepared to keep that SAME standard of right and wrong OURSELVES.
- b. Some might be tempted to say, “I would never impose a standard of right and wrong on someone else that I wouldn’t be willing to keep myself.”
- c. Really? Let’s see.

(1). Do you believe Christians shouldn’t consume alcohol, smoke tobacco, take illegal drugs, use profanity, tell vulgar or suggestive jokes, spend time viewing pornography, cheat on our income taxes, commit fornication (sexual immorality of any kind), commit adultery, commit acts of

homosexuality, steal, commit acts of violence against another, murder, etc., etc.?

- (2). Do you also believe a Christian shouldn't lie to protect ourselves or to save embarrassment, harbor resentment and an unforgiving spirit in their heart toward someone who offended or hurt us, allow ourselves to have lustful thoughts, willfully neglect spending time in prayer, willfully neglect spending time reading and meditating on the Word of God, willfully neglecting opportunities God has provided us to come together and worship Him and His Son in spirit and in truth, etc., etc.?

2. In the **8th chapter of the gospel of John**, Jesus was confronted by a group of men who were trying to trap Him into passing judgment on a woman caught in the act of adultery.

- a. **John 8:3-6** – *Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which*

to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.

- (1). Here is some poor woman caught in the very act of committing adultery and these SCRIBES AND PHARISEES are dragging here through the streets of Jerusalem to bring her to Jesus wanting to know how HE is going to judge her.
- (2). Under the Law of Moses she should have been put to death. And so these scribes and Pharisees wanted to see if Jesus would uphold the LAW or if HE would let her go.
- (3). The scribes and Pharisees would NEVER think of actually COMMITTING adultery (perhaps) – they operated on a much HIGHER standard of righteousness in their own minds.
- (4). And so when Jesus seemed to completely ignore them, they pressured Him again to give them an answer.

- b. **John 8:7-9** – *So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one,*

beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

- (1). If we were in the crowd that day, which one of US would have been able to cast the first stone at this woman?
- (2). One by one – from the oldest to the youngest – they walked away.
- (3). Why did the OLDEST walk away first? Let me suggest one possible reason. Those of us who have lived 60 and 70 or more years have more years to look back on an imperfect life than you who are younger.
- (4). But it's not a question of how MANY sins we've committed in the past, or how BAD those sins were, it's that we have ALL sinned and fall short of the glory of God. **(Romans 3:23)**
- (5). So NONE of us have the right to set a standard of righteousness for ANYONE.
- (6). It's not MY standard of righteousness you need to live by (because I don't always keep it myself), and it's not your PARENT'S standard of righteousness you need to live by (because THEY don't always keep it either).

(7). It's GOD'S standard of righteousness you need to live by,
and that standard of righteousness is found in the pages of
THIS BOOK!

c. Now, let's look at the rest of the story: **John 8:10-12** – *When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." 12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

(1). Jesus taught a wonderful principle here – exercising GRACE, MERCY and FORGIVENESS make us Christ-like, while being AN ACCUSER makes us like our enemy Satan, whom the apostle John said, is the *"accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night..." (Revelation 12:10)*

(2). Anyone can ACCUSE or FIND FAULT or COMDEMN another.

(3). But only the GODLY can truly show GRACE, MERCY and FORGIVENESS to OTHERS who have sinned.

B. However, Jesus not only condemned judgment that operates with DOUBLE-STANDARDS, he ALSO condemned judgment that is BLIND to our OWN faults.

1. **Matthew 7:3-5** – *And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

2. This is another teaching of Jesus on judging that has often been misinterpreted.

- a. Jesus is not saying we shouldn't be aware of specks in the eyes of others – which is a way of saying being aware of relatively minor sins or inequities in the lives of others.
- b. What he IS saying is that we shouldn't be so concerned about relatively minor sins or inequities in the lives of others while we ignore the GLARING, ENORMOUS sins in our OWN lives.
- c. Furthermore, Jesus is NOT saying we can't remove the speck from our brother's eyes.
- d. What he IS saying is that we should FIRST deal with our OWN sin before we set out to help others deal with theirs.

- e. He said, FIRST *remove the plank from your own eye, and*
THEN *you will see clearly to remove the speck from your*
brother's eye. (v. 5)
- 3. Perhaps the TWO best examples of people being quick to see the sins in the lives of OTHERS, but NOT so quick to see their own sin of judgmental pride are found in the gospel of Luke.
- 4. One is an actual event that prompted Jesus to illustrate His point with a parable, the other is simply a parable.
 - a. **Luke 7:36-50** – *Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. 37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, 38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher,*

say it." 41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." 44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman ? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." 48 Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

- (1). The problem with our friend Simon the Pharisee is that he could see the sins of this woman, but he was blinded to his own sinful judgmental and prideful attitudes.
- (2). Granted, his sins were not as OPEN and OBVIOUS as those of the woman, BUT he still HAD sins that were just as spiritually destructive – only HIS sins were hidden deep within the dark recesses of his own biased and judgmental heart.

b. **Luke 18:9-14** – *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

- (a). Here is the classic example of a man who could see sins in the lives of others but was blinded to his own prideful, boastful, arrogant, holier-than-thou attitude.
 - (b). His prayer may have SOUNDED wonderful, but it went no higher than the ceiling.
5. In Luke's account of The Sermon on the Mount we're given an encapsulated version of the teachings of Jesus in Matthew.
- a. Luke distills the teaching of Jesus on being judgmental down to its purest essence: **Luke 6:37** – *"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."*
 - b. Simple, isn't it! Don't judge, don't condemn, but rather forgive.
 - c. Why? So that WE won't be judged by the standard we set for everyone else, and so that WE won't be condemned by God when we fail to live up to even our OWN standards of judgment, but rather find grace, mercy and forgiveness.

CONCLUSION:

I. Are you a judgmental person?

A. Do you find yourself being quick to spot sins and areas of weakness in the lives of others, and perhaps even more quick to condemn others for the sins in their lives?

1. And at the same time do you ignore, or perhaps even tolerate, sin in your OWN life?

2. The apostle Paul summed it up best when he wrote to Christians in Rome and in the city of Corinth.

a. **Romans 14:10-13** – *But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*

b. **2 Corinthians 5:10** – *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

3. Paul made it crystal clear – we're NOT the judge of another person's heart simply because God hasn't given us that right.
 - a. We won't be judged by one another on that final day, we will all give an account of ourselves to GOD because we will all be standing before the judgment seat of CHRIST!
 - b. Your home in heaven won't depend on what I THINK about you, but rather what the LORD KNOWS about you.
- B. Are you ready to stand before the judgment seat of Christ?
 1. If you've never come to Jesus Christ in complete faith and obedience, then....
 2. If you have given your life to Christ in your obedience to the gospel of Christ, but along the way have become quick to see sins in the lives of others while being blinded to your own, then...